

# SOFTWARE HELP

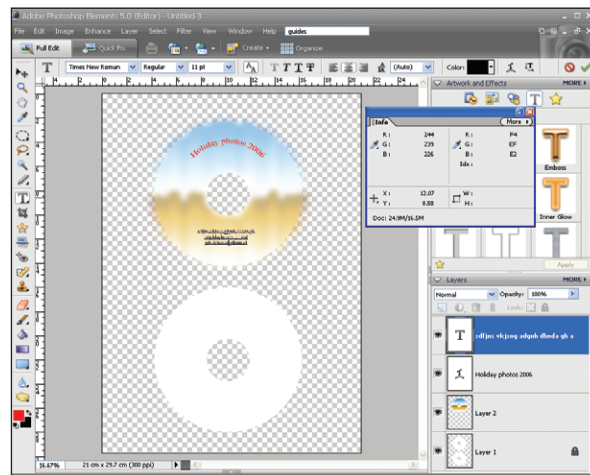
## Printing CD labels from Photoshop Elements

**Q** I use Neato CD labels to add artwork and information to my audio compilations and backups, but the MediaFace labelling software is basic, so I design my labels in Photoshop Elements and then import them as a JPEG into MediaFace. Is it possible to print directly from Photoshop Elements on to labels?

Daniel Moore

**A** Photoshop Elements 5 has a dedicated label-design wizard, but it doesn't include templates for printing on to commercially available labels. However, it's not hard to create a template yourself. Type Ctrl-N to create a new file and select A4 from the Preset: list and Transparent as the Background Contents. Measure the size and position of the labels on the you're using. CD labels will have a diameter just under 12cm, but you also need to know the diameter of the central hole, plus each label's distance from the edge of the paper.

In Photoshop Elements, click the Window menu followed by Info to show the Info palette. Select the Elliptical Marquee tool, hold down the Shift key and click and drag to create a selection that's the same size as your labels. Holding down the Shift key maintains a perfect circle rather than an ellipse, and you'll be able to see its size in the bottom-right of the Info palette. Select the paint bucket tool and fill it white. Return to the Elliptical Marquee tool and create a smaller circle for the label's central hole. Position it by eye in the middle of the larger circle and hit the Del key to create your doughnut-shaped template.



▲ Create your own templates for printing labels for your CDs

From the View menu, select Rulers. Use the onscreen rulers and the Info palette to position the template so it matches the label on your Neato paper. To create two labels on a page, find the Layers palette, right-click the layer, select Duplicate Layer... and position it as necessary. When both templates are in place, select the upper one, type Ctrl-E to combine them as one layer and click the padlock icon in the Layers palette to lock it. Save the document as a Photoshop .psd file for later use and add any text and graphics you want to appear on your label. Because printers' paper handling is rarely accurate, it's worth keeping text a few millimetres away from the label's edges. Similarly, make any graphics a little bigger than the label dimensions if you want them to extend to the edge of the label. **BP**

## SQL counter required

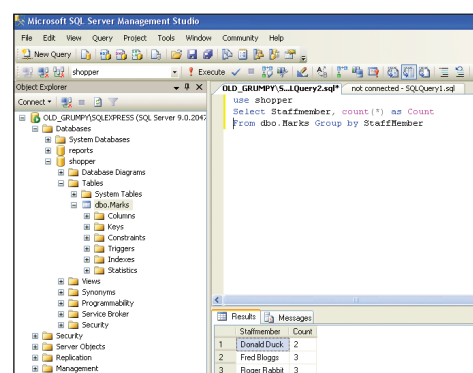
**Q** I have an SQL Server Express Edition data table where different members of staff input records. I want to count the number of records input by each staff member. How can I get a list of the users and the records they have input without passing each staff member's name one by one as a parameter?

Staff names are stored in the records they have entered. I know it would be better to store an ID number, but it works for us. I want a query that counts how many times each staff member appears in the table and produces an output such as:

| StaffMember  | Count |
|--------------|-------|
| Fred Bloggs  | 3     |
| Donald Duck  | 2     |
| Roger Rabbit | 4     |

I've been experimenting with a parameter query called multiple times, once with each user's name. However, it's a pain to do and not at all efficient. Is there a better way?

Bob Mays



▲ Use Count(\*) to find how many times a person's name appears in the report

**A** The answer is easy if you can learn a little SQL. If your table is called Marks, you'll get the results you want by using the following SQL statement:

```
Select StaffMember, count(*) as Count*
From Marks*
Group by StaffMember*
```

This will produce an output in the format you are looking for. **KE**

## YOUR EXPERTS

Contact Software Help for software advice and answers

### Kay Ewbank

Database developer and productivity expert Kay Ewbank offers help with office applications.



### Ben Pitt

Professional musician and photography enthusiast Ben Pitt gives advice on using creative software.



softwarehelp@computershopper.co.uk

# Changing chart backgrounds in Excel

**Q** I've created a chart in Excel 2003 and want to customise its appearance. The vertical y-axis runs from 0 to 12 and I would like to draw a coloured bar across the chart spanning the region from y=3 to y=7. I would like to add further bars at different locations on the y-axis. The values on my horizontal x-axis are dates running along the bottom of the chart. However, they are not relevant as I want the bars to run across the full width of the chart. Should I change the chart background to create the horizontal coloured bars I want?

Brian Staton

**A** You want to create a coloured background to highlight different bands of your chart. Excel has no specific setting to do this, but there are a couple of ways to achieve it.

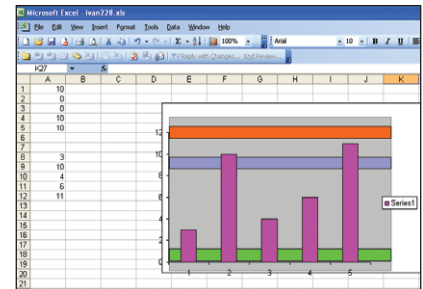
One solution is to create two charts. The first chart, the one with the plotted data, has its background set to 'none' for the fill area and border. Create the chart, select it, choose Format Plot area then set both Border and Area to None. You could do the same for the Chart

Area. Then create a second chart. The data for this depends on where you want the coloured areas on your 'real' chart to be. Enter data values of 0 where you don't want a coloured band to appear and a fixed value for all the places you do want a coloured band. So you might have a data series of:

0  
10  
0  
0  
10  
10  
0

This would create three coloured bands and four 'blank' areas.

You use this data as the basis for a bar chart with horizontal bars. The chart type you need is 100% stacked bar. Specify that the data is defined in columns rather than rows. This will give you bars that go all the way across the axis, though they will all be the same colour. You don't want series labels, axes or grid lines. Next you must alter the colours of the bars. Select the bars



▲ Place one chart on top of another to get background banding

one at a time, right-click and choose the Format Data Point option. You can then set the colour of the bar. Finally, drop the 'real' chart over the top of the background chart and size them so they're the same. You should then have the effect you're looking for. Deselect the foreground chart for the transparency effect to take effect.

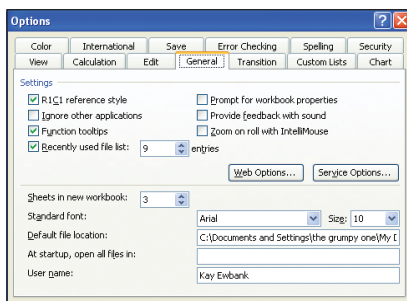
If you can't get the precise positioning with this method, create a background using a drawing or painting package. Set the background of the main chart to be the picture you've drawn, using Format Plot Area, Fill Effects, Picture. **KE**

## My Excel column headers have changed

**Q** I'm running Excel (from Office Professional 2000) on Windows XP Professional Edition. The alphabetic headings at the top of the columns have disappeared and have been replaced by numbered headings, which are not much use for formulae. I am not a computer geek, but I have spoken to friends who profess to be. They've come back with confident suggestions, but none has worked.

Keith Deacon

**A** You need to look in Options, General on the Tools menu. There's an entry for R1C1 reference style. You should find that this option is selected. Deselect it and your alphabetic column headings will hopefully return. **KE**



▲ Check Tools, Options, General for R1C1 references if column headers are numeric

## Will domestic DVD players read my discs?

**Q** I use Canopus Let's Photo DVD to make animated DVD slideshows to pass on to other people. I find that about seven per cent of the DVDs I produce won't work on a particular player. I've tried to narrow it down to specific makes of player without success. However, I've noticed that when you view the track on a commercial DVD it hardly shows but when looking at a PC-produced one the data is easy to see. Could this be related to the problem? Would burning the DVDs using different software make any difference?

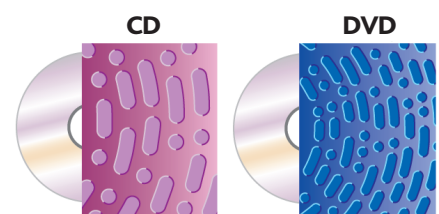
Rodney Lugton, r.lugton@homecall.co.uk

**A** Commercially produced, write-once and rewritable DVDs all work differently in the way data is physically recorded on to the disc, which is why the data side of commercial and homemade discs look different.

DVD players read discs by looking for reflective and non-reflective areas, so whether these markings are created by pits and bumps (as with commercially produced discs) or with a laser to release a dye (with homemade discs) should be irrelevant to the player. However, in reality some players are fussier than others and struggle to read certain types of disc. Pinning down which players are compatible with which disc types becomes more complicated when you consider the wide range of media available: writable and rewritable, single and double layer, + and - variants, not to mention the huge range of brands, the speed at which they're designed to be written, the speed they're written at and the drive used to record them.

With so many variables, it's impossible to come up with an authoritative explanation for why a particular disc won't work in a particular player. However, the one area that shouldn't have much effect is the choice of software used to write the disc, as this doesn't have any bearing on the mechanical process of getting data on to the disc.

One helpful source of information is [www.videohelp.com/dvdplayers](http://www.videohelp.com/dvdplayers). This online database is compiled by users and lists the media compatibility of about 7,500 DVD players. Type in the player's model number and you'll find all sorts of compatibility information. Otherwise, our only advice is to follow the popular theories and rumours for successful disc creation. Use branded media and stick to write-once, single-layer media when making discs for other people. Also, use slower writing speeds to give the drive more time to burn its data; this could, in theory, result in better-defined tracks of data. If you're having problems with a particular brand of media, try another. If you find one that seems to work for you, rush back to the shop and bulk-buy a year's worth of stock. **BP**



▲ The tracks on a DVD are closer together than on a CD, which makes domestic players fussier about the media you use

## Can my site resize visitors' web browsers?

**Q** I'm designing a website using Flash and want to be able to lock the size of a visitor's web browser so it fits my page design nicely. I can lock the Flash file easily, but how do I fix the Explorer window to the same dimensions?

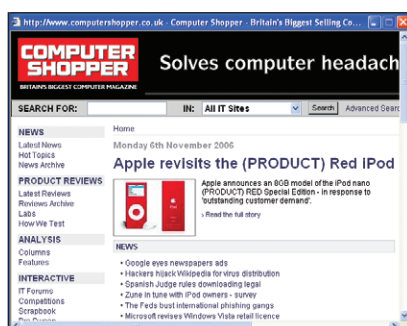
*Ernest Redmond, Sidcup*

**A** It's not possible to adjust or lock the size of a web browser window that's already open, but you can create a new pop-up window with fixed dimensions using Javascript. It's also possible to hide the toolbar, menu bar, address bar and scrollbars to create a satisfyingly minimalist browser window. Your homepage will consist of a simple link called Launch Site, which opens the proper homepage in a new window.

The HTML code below creates a link to [www.computershopper.co.uk](http://www.computershopper.co.uk) that will open in its own window with fixed dimensions of 640x480 pixels, with all the toolbars hidden. These are the internal dimensions for the window's content; any toolbars that are shown will make the overall window size larger. Although 17" LCD screens with 1,280x1,024-pixel resolutions are standard with new PCs, a large proportion of computers in use today have 1,024x768 and 800x600 desktops, so keep your pop-up window smaller than 775x430 pixels to avoid making your website inaccessible to people with smaller monitors.

```
<a href="javascript:void window.open('http://www.computershopper.co.uk', 'target01_window', 'menubar=0, toolbar=0, location=0, scrollbars=0, resizable=0, directories=0, width=640, height=480,')">Launch Site</a>
```

If you want to reactivate any of the toolbars, change the =0 that follows it to =1. Most of the parameter names are self-explanatory. 'Directories' switches on or off any additional toolbars such as Links or the Google Toolbar. When testing the page in Internet Explorer, you'll get a security warning that blocks the pop-up when running from your hard disk. However, once it's on the web, Internet Explorer and Firefox will allow the pop-up without any problems. **BP**



▲ Control the dimensions of pop-up windows with a Javascript link

## Installing Office 97 on Service Pack 2

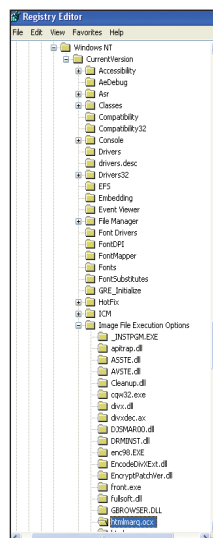
**Q** I have a copy of Microsoft Office 97 Professional Edition, which I bought when it was first released.

Since then, I have upgraded my OS to Windows XP Professional Edition. I reinstalled my copy of Office after the upgrade to Windows XP, upgraded Windows XP with Service Pack 1 then Service Pack 2 (SP2). Recently, I had a system crash, so I reinstalled the OS and attempted to reinstall Office 97. It all went well until a message appeared telling me that `htmlmarq.ocx` was unable to register itself in the System Registry. Office was unable to complete the installation.

SP2 seems to be the problem. It seems that without SP2 present, Office installs, and you can then upgrade the OS to SP2. But having installed SP2 and all the security upgrades, I don't want to uninstall them just to add Office then reinstall them afterwards. Is there a patch available that makes Office 97 install correctly on SP2? I don't want to upgrade my Office software because it is more than adequate for my needs.

*Steve Powell*

► Check the Registry for Image File Execution Options to make Office 97 work under Windows XP



**A** `Htmlmarq.ocx` is included as part of Windows XP. However, it was recently found to have a security problem, so XP Service Pack 2 has disabled it. SP2 leaves a reference to the file in the system Registry, but if you attempt to use the file, you will find that it isn't available.

When you install Office 97 on Windows XP SP2, the Registry entry causes it to find the disabled file and this generates an error. However, there's a simple solution. If you rename the defunct Registry key, Office 97 can install its own version of `htmlmarq.ocx`, and put in its own

Registry key. Office will install successfully and work correctly.

Before you begin to edit the system Registry make sure you back it up first. You can find details of how to back up the Registry at <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/322756/en-us>

To modify the Registry, choose Run from the Start menu and in the dialog box that appears type `regedit`. Navigate through the Registry to the key `HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentVersion\Image File Execution Options`.

You should find two keys: `htmlmarq.ocx` and `htmlmm.ocx`. Rename these as `htmlmarq.old` and `htmlmm.old`. After doing this Office 97 should install fine. **KE**

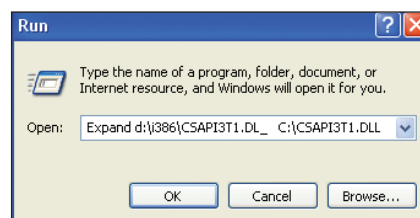
## Is there a spell on my Outlook spellchecker?

**Q** The spellchecker on my copy of Outlook Express has stopped working. When I try to spellcheck a message, I am told, "An error occurred while the spelling was being checked". The spellchecker works fine in Microsoft Office. I understand the two programs are intimately linked; why doesn't it work in Outlook Express?

*David Collins*

**A** The error you mention can be caused by Outlook Express being unable to find the shared files directory, or because various files are missing or damaged. First, you must try to reinstall the files known to cause this error.

The file you need to check is called `CSAPI3T1.DLL` and is stored in the folder `Program Files\Common Files\Microsoft Shared\Proof`. If you look on your Windows XP CD you'll find the non-expanded version of this file, `CSAPI3T1.DL_`, in the `\i386` directory. Put the Windows XP CD in the drive, choose Run from the Start menu and type this command:



▲ Expand the `CSAPI3T1` file to turn spellchecking back on in Outlook Express

```
Expand x:\i386\CSAPI3T1.DL_ C:\CSAPI3T1.DLL
```

Here `x` is the letter of your CD drive. You can then move the file `CSAPI3T1.DLL` from the root directory of `C:` to the proofing folder:

```
Program Files\Common Files\Microsoft Shared\Proof
```

If that doesn't work, try checking the system Registry. Use Start, Run to launch `RegEdit`. Find the entry for `HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Shared Tools`. Here, you'll find a Registry value for `SharedFilesDir`. It should end with a backslash (`\`), if it doesn't, add one so it reads:

```
C:\Program Files\Common Files\Microsoft Shared\
```

Either of these methods should hopefully restore your spellchecker in Outlook Express. **KE**



# Handling errors in report expressions

**Q** I'm using SQL Server Reporting Services to create reports for my users. However, I am getting grief from them because sometimes they see #error in their reports. I know why this happens; sometimes the field I'm dividing by has a value of zero, and Reporting Services treats that as an error. I want to show a more user-friendly message, so I don't get panicked phone calls telling me the report is broken.

*Robert Wilson*

**A** This can be a worrying side effect of the way SQL Server Reporting Services works. The problem arises only when you're dividing by values that are

neither integers or doubles; in most cases, they will be by one or the other.

Suppose you want to show the cost of a delivery's carriage as a percentage of the cost of the item sold. Put a text field on the report with a control source such as:

```
=Fields!Carriage.Value /  
Fields!Price.Value
```

This works fine until you get a record with Price as zero, such as a free gift. Then you get #error in your report, because you are trying to divide by a decimal field with a value of 0. Even if you think you've found a way round it by using an IIf statement, you still get an error. For example:

```
=IIf(Fields!Price.Value = 0,  
"N/A", Fields!Carriage.Value /  
Fields!Price.Value)
```

This will still give you an error. Visual Basic (which you're using 'under the covers' here) calls all the functions used in the IIf expression before it tries to evaluate the overall result. So the zero value still generates an error.

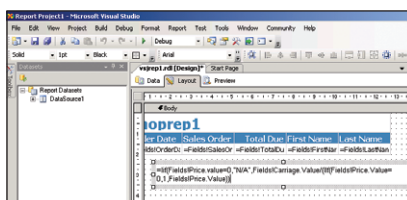
To get around this, we'll use an IIf function to check whether the Price value is 0. If it isn't, we'll use the original value for the division; otherwise, we'll use 1 for the division. Here's the expression:

```
= Fields!Carriage.Value /  
IIf(Fields!Price.Value = 0, 1,  
Fields!Price.Value)
```

The IIf expression looks at the value of the Price field. If it's 0, a denominator of 1 is returned; otherwise, the value in the Price field is returned. This does generate another problem, though. For those items with a price of zero, you're giving a wrong (and misleading) answer. To correct this, you need to check whether the price is zero to decide what you ought to show:

```
=IIf(Fields!Price.Value = 0,  
"N/A", Fields!Carriage.Value /  
IIf(Fields!Price.Value = 0, 1,  
Fields!Price.Value))
```

'N/A' can be replaced by any text you want. 'Zero priced item', for instance, would be more useful if your report had sufficient space. **KE**



▲ Nest IIf checks to avoid #error appearing in your reports

# Recording when records are entered in Access

**Q** I'm using Access and have a data entry form with a subform that lists updates on the record's status. When someone adds a comment to the list in the subform, I want to store the date and

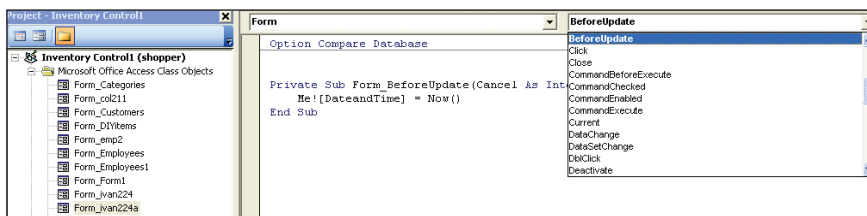
time that it was added. I've tried setting the default value of the date and time control on the subform to Now(), but when the record is saved it puts the current date and time into the next row (for new items) rather than the row

with the status update. How can I get it to store the date and time in the row just added?

*Mike Charlton*

**A** The default value isn't the answer, because this is generated before a new item is entered. Instead, set the time as the new item is completed by using the subform's BeforeUpdate event to create an event procedure along the lines of the following code. **KE**

```
Private Sub Form_BeforeUpdate(Cancel  
As Integer)  
Me![DateandTime] = Now()  
End Sub
```



▲ Use the BeforeUpdate event to store the date and time as a record is completed

# Word freezes at startup

**Q** My copy of Word 2000 seems to hang on startup. It displays the splash screen but then nothing for about 10 minutes. Finally, Word starts as if everything is fine. There are no error messages. Typing Word.exe /a in Start, Run starts it, but it is unusable. Previously, deleting Normal.dot cured the problem. It still does, but only once; each time I have to delete Normal.dot before starting.

*Adrian Cooke*

**A** The /a switch is used to start Word in its default installation, without any customisations such as third-party templates. You say deleting Normal.dot overcomes the problem for one use of Word. This suggests there's something systematically

changing Normal.dot on startup. You need to clear out what's being loaded in Word. With Word closed, make sure your system is showing all your files. Select Start, My Computer then Tools, Folder Options, View, Show Hidden Files and Folders. Find the following folders and remove any items to a temporary folder. Make a note of what you move; you might want to put them back one at a time once Word is working:

C:\Documents and Settings\user name\  
Application Data\Microsoft\Word\Startup

C:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\Office9\Startup

Start Word with the /a switch and go to Tools, Templates and Add-ins. Untick any items listed here, but make a note of them first; you can add

them back one at a time to see which is the culprit. Then look in Tools, Customize to find out which COM Add-ins are being used. Drag the COM Add-ins entry to your Word Toolbar. Close the Customize dialog box and click on the COM Add-ins button. Remove anything listed there; again, make a note of them. You can now get rid of the COM Add-ins button by holding down the Alt key and dragging it from the toolbar to your blank document. Close Word and open it normally to see if the problem has cleared.

There are other reasons why Word might start slowly, such as Registry corruption or having a network printer as your default printer when you're not logged on to the network. However, the fact that a clean copy of Normal.dot and the /a switch clear the problem means these are less likely to be the culprits. **KE**